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Provisional summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 June 2004, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. Rasi ..... (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

ECOSOC event to consider the issue of transition from relief to development

1. **The President** noted that an agreement had been reached during informal consultations whereby a meeting to discuss the issue of transition from relief to development would be held on Monday, 12 July 2004, in the morning. It had been agreed that the meeting would be "informal" and would begin with brief presentations followed by discussions with delegations; there would be no outcome document or official records; and a brief reference to the holding of the meeting would be made in the official report of the Council.

2. **Ms. Gustafson** (United States of America) expressed her regret at the low-profile nature of the meeting and the lack of official records. The issue was important and deserved to be put on record. She trusted that no precedent was being set and that the matter would be dealt with in a more substantive way in the future.

3. **Ms. Betson** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, agreed with the representative of the United States, and confirmed that the European Union would take an active part in the meeting.

4. **The President** said she took it that the Council agreed to hold an event, the modalities of which she had just described in order to discuss the issue of transition from relief to development.

5. *It was so decided.*

Report of the Committee for Development Policy (E/2003/33; E/2004/L.10)

6. **The President** invited the Council to turn to the report of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) on its fifth session (E/2003/33), to consider the question of the graduation of Cape Verde and Maldives from the list of least developed countries. She then invited the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution E/2004/L.10.

7. **Ms. Cronenberg-Mossberg** (Sweden), in summarizing the content of the draft resolution, said that it was the result of long discussions and thanked the members of the Council for their close cooperation.

Action on draft resolution E/2004/L.10

8. **The President** informed the council that the representative of the United States of America had requested a vote on the draft resolution.

9. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, thanked the representative of Sweden for her valiant effort, which unfortunately had not been totally satisfactory inasmuch as one Member State had rejected the proposed formula.

10. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that those countries, which were not opposed to graduation but rather urged it, had been striving for a formula that would follow on from General Assembly resolution 46/206. Although not pleased with all the provisions of the draft, in a spirit of consensus they had agreed to its adoption, as had all delegations except for one. He urged all members of the Council to vote in favour, since any attempt to block the adoption flouted the principles of the United Nations.

11. **Ms. Gustafson** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her Government would vote against the draft because the text was unbalanced. It focused on transition but took no meaningful decision on the graduation process, which had been paralysed for many years. In 1991 the General Assembly had established a procedure for graduating countries, and the draft resolution distorted and delayed that process. Moreover, it requested the Secretary-General to take actions that were properly within the purview of other institutions, and stated that the Council would take a decision that it lacked the authority to take.

12. It had been 10 years since a country had graduated from the list of least developed countries, and the resolution was likely to perpetuate that state of affairs. Some countries did not belong on the list, while others that did were not listed. That situation undermined the objectivity of the list and the legitimacy of special measures for listed countries. Cape Verde and Maldives had been identified as qualifying for graduation in 1997 and 2000, respectively. Pursuant to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/206, graduation would become effective in 2007 if the findings of CDP were adopted in the autumn. That represented 10 and 7

years, respectively, which should be enough time for transition.

13. Her Government hoped that the procedures for graduating LDCs envisaged by the Assembly in 1991 would be resumed. It could have supported a draft resolution that addressed the issue of preparation for the transition following graduation.

14. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) observed that it would have been preferable to avoid a vote that would postpone substantive consideration of the question of the graduation of two countries. He confirmed that, as a member of the Group of 77 and China, his country would vote in favour of the draft resolution. His concern was not confined to graduation. Institutionally, the proper forum for consideration of the matter was the Committee for Development Policy and, as a matter of principle, the Council should not question decisions taken by that Committee without due justification.

15. *At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania.

Against:

United States of America.

16. *The draft decision was adopted by 49 votes to 1.*

17. **Ms. Betson** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Iceland, said that the European Union welcomed the widespread agreement reached on the text of the draft resolution but would have preferred adoption by consensus. The time had come for Cape Verde and Maldives to graduate from the list of least developed countries, and the Council would take a positive decision in that respect at the forthcoming substantive session.

18. The European Union continued to be the most important supporter of the least developed category. Support was voluntary and inspired by the wish to assist the weakest and poorest countries. The category must, therefore, remain credible and focused on the least advanced developing countries. Accordingly, the European Union reaffirmed the importance it attached to the triennial review by CDP, the purpose of which was to determine which countries should be added to or graduated from the list. Graduation should be considered a positive achievement.

19. The European Union welcomed the remarkable progress made recently by Cape Verde and Maldives, and at the same time was aware of the need to ensure a smooth transition that would not disrupt development plans and programmes. There was an urgent need for the international community to address the possible issues related to smooth transition. Countries in a position to graduate should have a clear picture of what was involved. In that light, the European Union looked forward to the Secretary-General's report and its recommendations on how to formulate a smooth transition strategy. General guidelines were needed, to be applied to each graduating country.

20. **Ms. Grindlay** (Australia) said it was vital that the least developed countries did not lose momentum and expressed regret that existing criteria did not give appropriate consideration to the unique status of small island developing states.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.